

Appelsbosch outdoor gym launch: KZN Health MEC says physical exercise and good diet can help you live healthier and longer

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KWAZULU-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has once again urged the public to help lower the burden of disease in the province by eating well and getting into the habit of engaging in regular physical exercise.

Speaking at the official opening of a newly-built outdoor gym at Appelsbosch yesterday (06 February 2018), MEC Dhlomo said the adoption of healthy lifestyles is the only solution to halting the prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, high blood pressure and some cancers, which has reached epidemic proportions.

The outdoor gym is a sponsorship from the South African Sugar Association. It consists of exercising and body-building equipment, as well as a children's play area, and cost R260 000 to build.

"A healthy lifestyle is a way of living that lowers the risk of being seriously ill or dying early. Not all diseases are preventable, but a large proportion of deaths, particularly those from coronary heart disease and lung cancer, can be avoided. Scientific studies have identified certain types of behaviour that contribute to the development of non-communicable diseases and early death. Health is not just about avoiding disease. It is also about physical, mental and social wellbeing. When a healthy lifestyle is adopted, a more positive role model is provided for other people in the family, particularly children."

KwaZulu-Natal, like other provinces, is buckling under a quadruple burden of diseases made up of HIV, AIDS and TB; the high rates of maternal and child mortality (often due to teenage pregnancy); non-communicable diseases (such as cancer, diabetes, obesity, hypertension) and violence and injuries.





Factors that contribute to this situation include the sedentary lifestyles that many people lead; poor health choices that they make, such as having unprotected sex, engaging in substance abuse; and unhealthy dietary habits.

*"We encourage people to take charge of their own health and be aware of the warning signs pointing to possible health risks. While the Department can provide preventative health care, it is ultimately the people who must embrace the measures introduced"*he said.

MEC Dhlomo told a large group of people gathered at the launch that following a healthy diet is just as important.

"People are urged to get used to eating boiled food, fruits and vegetables. Everything you eat has a bearing on your health. Lower your intake of oily food. The body only needs a particular amount of food. Don't eat more than you need to. You don't become fat by mistake. It's a choice you make, whereby you eat more than you need to, and then not exercise. Get used to regular physical exercise."

MEC Dhlomo urged the community to be aware of risk factors such as smoking, drinking, taking drugs, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and stress.